

Fifty years ago... Do you remember when..

...on April 4, 1933, the S. S. Kresge Co. 5¢-10¢-25¢ store re-opened in a new three story building on S. W. Adams Street?

The new "fireproof" building replaced one which had been destroyed by fire in December 1932. The floors were concrete; the building was faced on the front with tan bricks and trimmed with Indiana limestone.

Opening specials at the fountain and luncheonette included a "Complete Dinner with Drink" for 20¢ (Roast young chicken, celery dressing, giblet gravy, head lettuce salad, oven browned potatoes, hot biscuit and butter, and coffee, tea, or milk). Sandwiches were 5¢, large steins of root beer were 2 for 5¢, and a large portion of homemade pie with whipped cream, cheese or ice cream was 10¢.

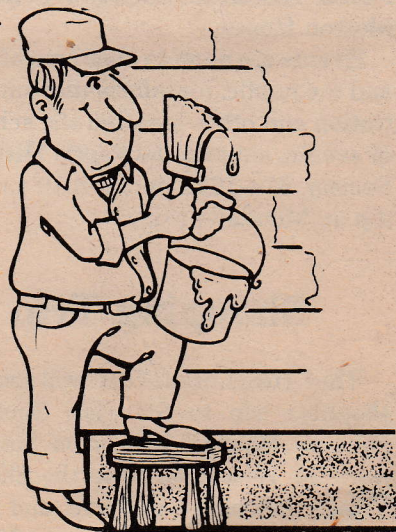
The building had been completed in "record time;" according to the *Peoria Star*, just ten weeks had elapsed "from the time work was started until the last coat of paint was applied to the interior."

Among those applying that last coat of paint was Peorian Cecil Devine, now retired but then a young painter in his parent's business—Frank H. ("Hook") Koehler's painting and decorating business. The family lived at what was then 731 W. Ayres (now 2407); the painting business was located behind the house.

Devine remembers that there was such a rush to complete the building and re-open the Kresge store they were instructed to paint the walls and ceilings

before the plaster dried; Koehler was concerned the paint would peel but did as he was told – and the paint did not peel, said Devine, who remembers being told that the store was losing \$200 worth of business each day the store was closed. About twelve painters worked on the job, earning about 51¢ an hour, he recalls. Once finished, the store opened to a waiting public and a large number of people were put to work – "every counter had a girl behind it," Devine reminisced.

Though many changes have taken place over the past fifty years, both the building and the painting business are still a part of Peoria. The building is part of Peoria's downtown "street scene" on S.W. Adams; Koehler Painting and Decorating, now owned by Paul Dotson, is located at 1027 N. Swords in West Peoria.



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